

## المحكى له في بعض مقالات جوزيف أديسون وزكى نجيب محمود:

### دراسة مقارنة لمقالات مختارة

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يقصد من وراء مصطلح المحكى له (narratee) ذلك القارئ الذى يتبلور من خلال النص المقروء أى أنه موجود داخل النص ذاته، ويتضمن أى نص ما يشير إلى أن الكلام موجه إلى قارئ معين موجود فى تركيبة النص نفسه. وهناك فارق بين المحكى له والقارئ الحقيقى فالأول لا يتغير أبداً فهو جزء من النص، أما الثانى فهو ذلك القارئ الذى يتناول النص ويقرأه. وفى اعتقادى أن نوعية المحكى له هو سبب من أسباب نجاح أى كاتب بين قرائه. وقد قام بشرح فكرة المحكى له بتعمق الناقد المعروف جيرالد برينس (Gerald Prince) وخصوصاً فى بحثه «مدخل إلى دراسة المحكى له» (١٩٨٠) وهو المرجع الأساسى الذى يعتمد عليه هذا البحث وذلك فى تعريف المحكى له وفى المنهج المتبع.

ويتناول بحثنا إيجاد ملامح المحكى له من خلال بعض المقالات المختارة للكاتب الأنجليزى المعروف جوزيف أديسون (١٦٧٢ - ١٧١٩) والفيلسوف المصرى العظيم الدكتور زكى نجيب محمود (١٩٠٥ - ١٩٩٣) اللذين قدما فكرهما من خلال مقالات أدبية. والنقطة التى يلتقى فيها كلا الكاتبين رغم الزمن التاريخى الذى يفصل بينهما هو أن زكى نجيب محمود تعتمد فى بداية حياته الكتابية أن يقلد سلفه الأنجليزى فيما يخص شكل المقال الأدبى والغرض من كتابته كما وضح ذلك فى كتابه المعروف جنة البسيط (١٩٨٢) وبالذات فى مقاله «المسمى «المقالة الأدبية».

وقع الاختيار فى هذا البحث على مقالين لأديسون نشر فى صحيفة «السيكتاتور» (The Spectator). أولهما يتناول موضوعاً علمياً يتناول فيه تقديم علم التشريح وشرحه، ثم رؤية العالم نيوتن العلمية للكون وعظمة الخالق على خلق كل هذا وقد نشر هذا المقال فى ١٧١٢. وثانيهما مقال اجتماعى نشر فى ١٧١١ وفيه يتقد أديسون عادة المبارزة التى كان الأنجليز يلجأون إليها لكى يدافعوا عن شرفهم. أما المقالات التى اختيرت للدكتور زكى نجيب محمود فأولهما مقال بعنوان «البرتقالة الرخيصة» (١٩٤٧) وهو مقال اجتماعى يتقد من خلاله الكاتب عادة الناس فى اهتمامهم بالمظاهر أكثر من اهتمامهم بالجوهر. أما المقال الثانى فنموه جذور التصدع (١٩٨٥) ويشرح فيه الكاتب حالة الحياة الثقافية فى مصر بأسلوب فلسفى عن طريق مشكلة عادية يعرفها الجميع وهى مشكلة زيادة النسل.

وعند مقارنة المحكى له عند أديسون وعند الدكتور زكى نجيب محمود نستنتج أنه لم يتغير عند أديسون لأنه كان يعرف قارئه معرفة جيدة من البداية وهو قريب منه ويرجع ذلك إلى أن كل كتاباته لا تغطى إلا ما يقرب من عشر سنوات. أما بالنسبة للدكتور زكى نجيب محمود فقد تغيرت صورة المحكى له فى كتاباته خلال حياته الكتابية الطويلة وأصبح فى النهاية محكياً له له صفات عقلية محددة وهو يمثل الصفوة التى تقرأ له وتقههم فقارئه بعيد جداً عن مفهوم القارئ العام. وهكذا تختلف نوعية المحكى له أو القارئ الذى فى النص عند أديسون عن المحكى له عند الدكتور زكى نجيب محمود رغم أن مقالتهما تشترك فى كل من الشكل وعرض الفكرة والعقلانية والنزعة الدينية.

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ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> All the critics mentioned here applied their theories and methods of approach to specific literary works of their own choice. I have borrowed from them those quotations that helped me clarify my thesis.

<sup>2</sup> See Bal, 1999, 34-5 where he explains the way narration alternates with non-literary comments even in a scientific essay.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Johnson: *The Life of Addison in The Spectator* (vol. I): Johnson states that Addison was expected to take holy orders like his father Lancelot Addison but "was diverted from his original design" (iv). Later in his life, Addison returned to his vocation and engaged in a defence of the Christian religion (xiii) which became obvious in his so-called lay-sermons. Addison's rationalism, however, was in keeping with the scientific spirit of his age.

For Z.N. Mahmoud's genuine religious belief and rationalism respectively, see M.A. Abou Zeid: *Religious Thought in the work of Zaki Naguib Mahmoud* (1996) and F.E.M. Margui: *Reason and its Function in the Thought of Zaki Naguib Mahmoud* (1991) [both in Arabic].

<sup>4</sup> See for the kind of essays written in Egypt before the Forties which Z.N. Mahmoud disliked: A.L. Hamza: *The Genre of the Essay in Egypt* (1995) [in Arabic].

<sup>5</sup> Though the edition of the publication used here is the 1988 Al-Shorook edition, the first edition of *Fool's Paradise* in which both "The Literary Essay" (7-15) and "The Cheap Orange" (16-20) appear goes back to 1947, see Z.N. Mahmoud: *"From the Cabinet of my Papers"* (1996, 17) [in Arabic]. As for the second essay dealt with here, it was first published in the 1980s, as far as I could find out.

Addison's narratee is extremely well-defined, and forcefully present in the essays as a member of the vast eighteenth-century middle class. His exact social standing in that class stratum is not specified but intentionally left vague. Hence, Addison's narratee is, in fact, the eighteenth-century English real reader. Besides, it is a narratee that tends to reappear in all the writer's essays regardless of the kind of topic they tackle. This is because all Addison's periodical essays were published in the course of a decade, a period of time hardly allowing for tangible social changes regarding the readership.

As for Z.N. Mahmoud's narratee, it showed at first well-defined characteristics related to social standing, financial background, education, habits and intellectual standards as the first essay dealt with here shows. Forty years later, these characteristics narrowed down to encompass a narratee who is a well-read Arabic speaking Egyptian endowed with specific intellectual faculties. The narratee of Z.N. Mahmoud's later essay could only be one who has received adequate mental training and is endowed with specific intellectual traits among which a capacity for mental development and improvement of intellectual faculties are paramount.

Addison knew his narratee from the start. This is why his narratee coincides with his virtual reader, or, real reader. As for Z.N. Mahmoud, facing a vast, varied and rapidly developing readership through the forty years of his writing career, he decided to build up his own narratee, as shown in "Roots of the Rift" here.

Though both the English and the Egyptian essayists present a similarly well-organized essay containing social criticism, Addison addresses the general reader in eighteenth-century England, whereas Z.N. Mahmoud addresses a limited cultured élite in late twentieth-century Egypt. Their narratees amply prove this and partly account for the popularity and success they enjoyed among readers.

The narrator points out the positive characteristics revealed in his narratee by the way the latter answers back or helps to develop further the topic dealt with. Thus, the narratee's eagerness to learn (Z.N.M., 1985, 11), his intelligence and ambition (13), his brightness (14), his gift for understanding philosophy (16), his scientific mind (16), his intelligence (8) are pinpointed.

The narratee in Z.N. Mahmoud's essay is of one who knows the narrator's language, shares his nationality and is endowed with specific intellectual characteristics, a scientific analytical mind, clarity of ideas, power of synthesising and drawing conclusions, insight, good memory, inquisitiveness, ability to concentrate, stamina and a capacity for development. Z.N. Mahmoud's narratee is not static because his capacity for development and the improvement of his intellectual faculties is paramount. Qualities, such as social class, ideology, and physical appearance to be found in Z.N. Mahmoud's essays forty years earlier, tend to become less important in a narratee of a philosophical essay dealing with a social issue and living in the 1980s.

### Conclusion

Addison's and Z.N. Mahmoud's essays dealt with here clearly show that, though pertaining in form to the genre of the essay, they do not leave out the narrative element which appears here primarily in the imagined scenes and the figurative language as narration and non-literary comments alternate in them. Consequently, the characteristics of their respective narratees, or implied readers, can be established. These characteristics partly account for the popularity they enjoyed among their readership in their time.

A comparison between Addison's and Z.N. Mahmoud's narratees shows the following:

trying to find" [وما نحن بصدد البحث عنه] (14), "this is at the core of what we are saying . . . [تكنم في صحيح قولنا هذه الفكرة] (16), among others.

The narrator's explicit addresses to the narratee develop in the essay along with both the development of the topic dealt with and the narratee's mind. So from a second-person pronoun, it develops into "my son" [يا بني] (14), "my friend" [يا صاحبي] (14) and "my colleague" [زميلي] (17).

It is also in the second part of the essay that the narrator uses comparisons or analogies that tend to reconstruct the type of universe the narratee is acquainted with:

. . . in this way, man can control the forces of nature in the same manner a courageous trained rider controls his horse, namely by holding its bridle strongly in his grip and guiding it in the direction he wishes (15).

[ومن ثم يتاح له أن يكون سيداً يمسك بزمام الطبيعة، كما يسيطر الفارس الجري المدرب على جواده، مقيداً إياه بالجام والشكيمة، ليصرفه حيثما شاء، وكيفما شاء له أن ينصرف، . . .] (ص ١٥)

[There is a third type of man] who builds for himself a house of visions and dreams in the same way a spider knits its cobweb. So, he neither benefits from genuine religious belief nor relates to earthly reality (15).

[وإنما هو يبني لنفسه بيتاً من أوهامه وأحلامه، كما ينسج العنكبوت فلا هو ينعم بما رسمته له السماء، ولا هو يتقيد بواقع الأرض، . . .] (ص ١٥)

The imagery in both quotations describes the narratee's world as a tangible world that is close to earthly reality.



provides the narratee with information of how to start dealing with a topic like birth control philosophically. Both the questions the narratee sets and the attitude he assumes while listening to the lengthy answers of the narrator define him as a person who is interested in philosophy, self-confident, eager to learn (Z.N.M., 1985, 10), capable of understanding and assimilating the information he gets (11), docile and someone who accepts to be guided and checked.

The guidance the narrator provides is presented in the form of direct questions addressed to the narratee through which he develops a method for looking into things as the following examples illustrate:

"What do *you* think of this?" [ ماذا ترى فى ذلك؟ ]  
(Z.N.M., 1985, 12; emphasis added).

"What do *you* mean by the idea of time?"  
[ ماذا تعنى بفكرة الزمن؟ ] (12; emphasis added).

"*You* may remember that we developed *our* dialogue starting with the problem of . . ."  
[ لعلك تذكر أننا قد صعدنا حديثنا عن مشكلة . . . ] (13; emphasis added).

Starting in the sixth paragraph of the essay, the narrator introduces indirect signals in the form of first-person plural pronouns that imply the narratee and describe him as sharing with the narrator a similarity of intellectual power, analytical mind, nationality, interests, among other things, that are revealed throughout the gradual development of the essay. So, examples as the following are numerous: "This will suffice for us now" [ يكفيننا هذا القدر ] (Z.N.M., 1985, 11), "Now, we want to look into . . ." [ نريد الآن أن ننظر فى ] (12), "in our country" [ عندنا ] (12), "some of our intellectuals" [ جماعة المثقفين والمفكرين لدينا ] (13), "what we are

language, the language used here is that of the highly educated classes which is far above the level of the language of the average reader.

The narratee in Z.N. Mahmoud's essay is financially well off, has acquired Western habits, and knows about the world of publishing. He also shares the narrator's nationality and high intellectual standards. The narrator uses a refined style addressed to someone who is well-read in literature, free of social bias, who cares for and understands the moral values in his society. The implication is that he may also be used to solitude and meditation.

The second essay by Z.N. Mahmoud to be analyzed here is "Roots of the Rift" [ جنور الصدع ] (Z.N.M., 1985, 9-19). It consists of seventeen paragraphs of medium length dealing with an abstract issue.

The narrator makes clear in the introductory paragraph of the essay that he finds himself at a loss how to present to "people" [ للناس ] (i.e. readers) his view of the intellectual life in Egypt at present. His difficulty lies in the fact that he does not know how to make this difficult and complex topic "enter the minds of his readers" [ يجد طريقة إلى عقول ] (Z.N.M., 1985, 9). This shows that the narrator cannot clearly define his narratee at the outset but builds him up in the process of writing. The characteristics of this narratee who appears talking to the narrator within the text are the following:

He is first introduced by the narrator as a well-read student of science who enquires about the meaning of philosophy. Instead of giving him a ready-made answer, the narrator suggests to deal with a topic philosophically assuming that this exercise should eventually result in a definition of the term. The narrator decides to discuss birth control and a lengthy dialogue ensues between the narrator and the student, namely, his narratee, or implied reader, within the essay. While the topic is developed, specific characteristics of the narratee are revealed.

Only explicit signals appear in the first five paragraphs of the essay. These appear in the form of second-person pronouns. The narrator

sincerity as opposed to the apple's deceitful character since its rotten core cannot be seen at first sight. Both the narrator and his servant deplore the fact that oranges are cheap whereas apples are expensive.

The narratee is here further described by implication and more of his traits are revealed. He shares the narrator's nationality and knows about the market prices of goods. He is well-read in literature and can follow up figurative language. He is not socially biased and, so, accepts new information provided by Suleiman.

The narrator tells a story designed to clinch the point: A friend of his tells him that he could not persuade a publisher to publish one of his books which he knows is valuable. He attributes this to the fact that his name as author is obscure, which would not help with the sale of the book. The narrator replies figuratively by saying that the book is a cheap orange. Besides emphasizing the previously revealed characteristics of the narratee, this passage refers to an extra-textual experience known to both the narrator and the narratee, i.e. they are both familiar with the world of publishing.

There are, of course, explicit signals directly pertaining to the narratee such as when the narrator says that green-grocers underestimate the true value of oranges, and deplores this (17-8). Moreover, the second-person pronoun is used five times in succession in the last paragraph as the following examples shows: "If you wish, I could tell you about" [ ... إن شئت حدثتك عن ... ] (19-20). These imply that the narrator is ready to furnish the narratee with further examples of underestimation of genuine value. Finally, the essay ends with a pseudo-question in which the narrator wonders if oranges will ever be given the price they deserve (20).

Both explicit and indirect signals designate a narratee who cares for society and its values, who is familiar with figurative language, whose intellectual standard is higher than average. In contrast with Addison's

**The narratee in Z.N. Mahmoud's essays**

Z.N. Mahmoud contributed much to the essay form in Arabic. In "The Literary Essay" [لب المقالة] (1947)<sup>5</sup>, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the type of essay hitherto published in Arabic. He therefore suggested introducing a new form of essay emulating eighteenth-century English essayists. He singled out Addison as "the father of the English essay" [رب المقالة الانجليزية "أدسن"] (Z.N.M., 1947, 9). Regarding the relationship between author and reader, he states that the author should maintain a conversational tone in the essay and should consider his reader a friend, a colleague and a guest. The essay should include a social or moral criticism. He is obviously taking Addison as his model.

The first essay chosen for analysis here is entitled "The Cheap Orange" [البرتقالة الرخيصة] (Z.N.M., 1988, 16-20) dealing with a socio-moral issue and criticising the attitude of people who are usually interested in appearances and disregard the essence and genuine value of things. It is all presented figuratively, namely, in terms of an implied comparison between oranges and apples, oranges are cheap but always good and nutritious, whereas apples are expensive and often rotten at their core.

The essay consists of six paragraphs of varied lengths. Most of the signals addressing the narratee [or, the implied reader] are indirect ones that imply and thus describe him. The first of these appears in the opening paragraph where the narrator presents himself as sitting at the dining table, about to finish his meal with an orange, served to him by a servant on a plate with a knife. Instead of eating the orange, the narrator holds it in his hand and meditates upon its shape, colour and overall beauty. Further indirect signals occur in two consecutive scenes in which the narrator resorts to ironical devices which imply the narratee and, again, describe him: The narrator's servant Suleiman speaks of the orange and, figuratively, refers to its honesty, straightforwardness and

specific place in the middle class is described in this essay which deals with a moral and social issue, whereas it is vague in the previous essay that deals with an intellectual issue.

Examining the narratees that emerge from Addison's two essays dealt with here, we notice that most of their characteristics are pinpointed and adequately described. Though in the second essay the narratee seems to be an upper-middle-class gentleman, there are several characteristics in Addison's style that tend to widen the spectrum so as to include a wider range of the eighteenth-century rising middle class. The following are among these stylistic characteristics:

The language in which the narratee is addressed is a common straightforward and simple language that could address both the highly educated and the layman. Moreover, additional and apparently unnecessary information is included in the text that tends to broaden the implied social stratum of the narratee. So, in the essay on duelling, in which the narratee may be described as an upper-middle-class gentleman, the narrator talks mostly of men and women instead of gentlemen and ladies. The narrator also includes in the extract a parody of a romance which adds to the irony since the reader is familiar with courtly romances:

"The damsel is mounted on a white palfrey, *as an emblem of innocence*" (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 2, 74; emphasis added).

The narratees in Addison's two essays dealt with here tend to coincide with the essayist's virtual reader, namely, Addison's contemporary reader. Though Prince states that any resemblance between virtual reader and narratee should be considered an exception and not the rule (1980, 9), in the case of Addison, as has been shown, we do have such an exception.

## FIKR WA IBDA'

whether it be that they are pleased to see one who is  
a terror to others fall like a slave at their feet . . .  
(*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 2, 73).

Part of a medieval romance is parodied in which

The damsel is mounted on a white palfrey [and has]  
a dwarf for her page [to guard] her chastity . . . .  
The Knight . . . attacks everything he meets that is  
bigger and stronger than himself [and] seeks all  
opportunities of being knocked on the head (74).

There is a reference to Spain where a lady is seen

to cast an accidental glance on her lover from a  
window [that is] two or three storeys high. [The  
lover enters] in a single combat with a mad bull [to  
prove his courage and his passion for his mistress]  
(74).

There is a reference to a Frenchman who provokes an English peer  
into entering a duel (75). There is also a reference to lying being an  
indication of lack of courage and "to say a lie, though but in jest, is an  
affront that nothing but blood [i.e. duel] can expiate" (74-5). Thus, the  
narratee obviously recognizes the irony in these situations indicating him  
as one who knows about courtly love, reads romances, delights in  
seeing Spaniards and Frenchmen ridiculed, among other things.

The kind of narratee that emerges in this second essay is that of an  
habitual reader of *the Spectator* who is a friend of the narrator. He is  
acquainted with classical literature. He is respectable, respected,  
trustworthy and reliable. He may belong to the upper middle class and  
may have aristocratic connections. It is worth noting that the narratee's

The text presents three explicit signals in which the distance and the relationship between the narrator and narratee are established. The Latin quotation by Horace heading the essay is translated as "You know to fix the bounds of right and wrong", which indicates the narratee as somebody whose moral judgement is trustworthy. Appearing as it does in both its Latin version and English translation, it may emphasize the narratee's trustworthiness and may imply that the narratee is familiar with the classics but does not necessarily know the Latin language which leaves his exact position in the wide middle-class stratum vague. Two other explicit signals are "my reader" and "the reader" which imply that the narratee's presence is seriously taken into consideration and that he is well-known to the narrator. The narratee is both respectable and respected and is treated with deference since the narrator apologises for any strange ideas that might be mentioned in the essay as belonging to outsiders because, as far as he is concerned, he personally shares the narratee's opinions.

Indirect signals appear in the form of extra-textual experience known to both the narrator and his narratee as "the-club", "the speculation of this day", "passages of last Thursday's" which establish that the narratee is a habitual reader of *the Spectator* and shares the time, place and interests of the narrator. The essay dealing with the concept of honour and its relation to duelling describes the narratee as a gentleman who belongs most probably to the upper middle class.

The remaining addresses to the narratee appear in the form of a series of extra-textual information in which the narrator uses ironic devices to ridicule the concept of honour when related to duelling. All these imply that the narratee is the narrator's equal and friend. They merely emphasize the traits already established in the opening paragraph of the essay. Examples of irony are:

Women are shown to admire courage in men

dominate or win over, but does not succeed because the essay ends with an apology.

The narratee emerges from this essay as more or less educated, familiar with the classics, a contemporary of the narrator and sharing the latter's interests in and knowledge of the scientific progress achieved. He knows his intellectual limitations but is eager to learn more about religion and science. He is, however, assumed to be docile and easily manipulated, respectable and respected and a member of the vast eighteenth-century middle class. The narratee's exact social standing within that middle class is not specified, perhaps intentionally.

Addison's second essay chosen here is essay no. 99, dd. Sat. 23 June 1711 (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 2, 73-6). It is an indictment of the habit of duelling which was common in Addison's days and did not drop out of English society before the mid-nineteenth century (see Trevelyan, 1972, 174, 330 & 518).

Addison opts here for irony as a rhetorical device, which he usually applied in social and moral criticism as he would point out later in one of his essays:

If I have any other merit in me, it is that I have new-pointed all the batteries of ridicule. . . . I have endeavoured to make nothing ridiculous that is not in some measure criminal, I have set up the immoral man as an object of derision: in short, if I have not formed a new weapon against vice and irreligion, I have at least shown how that weapon may be put to a right use which has so often fought the battles of impiety and profaneness (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 6, 190-91).

The essay at hand (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 2, 73-6) consists of eleven short paragraphs displaying a restricted variety of signals addressing and, thus, designating the narratee.



... who would not imagine there is some invisible power which diverts the cast? (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 7, 276)

... is it possible for chance to be thus delicate and uniform in her operations? (277)

These questions assume the narratee to need religious education and conviction in eighteenth-century England in which "practically everyone, in his own fashion, had faith" (Porter, 1983, 184) though religion had become rather a matter of social habit than of true religious belief. Here, again, the signal vaguely describes the narratee pointing at a trait that was a common social feature at the time.

Further indirect signals appear intermittently through the essay in the obviously polite addresses of the narrator to the narratee and in the apology with which the essay closes: "I think we may . . .", "if I may use the expression . . .", "I might also extend this speculation . . ." (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 7, 276), "in my opinion" (276) and, finally, "I have been particular on the thought . . . , because I have not seen it enlarged . . ." (278). These may, in fact, imply that the narratee is a person whose opinion should be respected, and whose position vis-a-vis the argument should not be ignored.

The language in which the narrator addresses the narratee is the common every-day language designating the narratee as educated, but with no restricted field of specialization, and, probably middle-class, but not fixed to any of its groupings.

In his essay on the narratee, Prince mentions that in some narratives there is "a sort of war", and "a desire for power" that can be found at the level of narration (1980, 22). This 'war' between 'narrator' and 'narratee' (or 'implied reader') is present in Addison's essay for the narrator is obviously stronger than the narratee whom he tries to

narratee's wish to learn which partly accounts for his docile and submissive attitude to the narrator. The narratee's limited standard of information is implied in examples such as the following:

It would be tedious to produce instances of this regular conduct of Providence, as it would be superfluous to those who are versed in the natural history of animals (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 7, 276).

And that the like chance should arise in innumerable instances, requires a degree of credulity that is not under the directions of common sense (278).

"Comparisons" or "analogies" (see Prince, 1980, 14-5) which tend to reconstruct the type of universe with which the narratee is familiar also appear in the essay. The narrator refers to the perfect and repeated symmetry that appears in every animal body as being the work of God, a feature that could not be attributed to chance:

Should a million dice turn up twice together the same number, the wonder would be nothing in comparison with this (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 7, 277, see also 276 & 278).

The reference to games of dice used figuratively, may be suggestive of visits to eighteenth-century famous London coffee-houses, frequented by educated gentlemen, men of business, merchants and writers (Trevelyan, 1972, 339-40).

There are further indirect signals that address the narratee in the form of what Prince calls "pseudo-questions" (1980, 14) as the following examples show:

through this type of essay to popularizing the name of Isaac Newton, the Newtonian world-picture and the scientific spirit for which the eighteenth-century is presently known (Sambrook, 1990, 8).

The essay in question consists of six lengthy paragraphs. Most of the signals addressing the narratee are indirect ones that imply and thus describe him, whereas only two explicitly address him. The indirect addresses are of different forms carrying abundance of information designed to provide the narratee with knowledge about the progress achieved in the field of anatomy. The essay uses the present tense and describes the narratee as the narrator's contemporary, a man eager to acquire new knowledge. The essay starts with a Latin quotation by Ovid and a reference to Galen, the Hellenistic philosopher and physician, which appears in the first paragraph. This "extra-textual information" (Prince, 1980, 14) describes the narratee's social standing as someone who is educated and well-read in the ancient classics. The narratee is included in the use of the first-person plural pronouns and indefinite pronouns which appear in thirty instances all through the essay, such as in "our modern anatomists", "we see wonders", "our surprise and amazement", "our senses", "our reason", "it would appear to us" (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 7, 275), "if one should always" (276), among others. These describe the narratee as one who shares the narrator's nationality and language, his scientific interests and awareness of contemporary scientific progress, and also his pleasure in revealing the greatness of God in his creation. These indirect signals also describe the narratee as docile and willing to be manipulated because he wants to learn from somebody he obviously trusts.

Other indirect signals imply that the narratee is intellectually more on the receiving side of the narrator, through the emphatic use of first-person pronouns, as in the following instances: "What I have said" (*The Spectator*, 1797, 275), "I shall here consider" (276) and "I refer my reader to" (278). At the same time, these indirect signals suggest the

would consider Addison's "virtual readers" - were specified in the tenth issue of the periodical dd. 12 March 1711 as:

. . . those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies, I mean the fraternity of spectators, who live in the world without having anything to do in it . . . . [the] tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars . . . , statesmen out of business . . . , the blanks of society . . . [and] the female world [in order to] divert [their] minds . . . from greater trifles (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. I, 39-40).

The readership he had in mind thus covered a wide spectrum of eighteenth-century middle-class society. They were mostly men 'of leisure', rich, more or less educated and ready to learn.

Addison specifies the aim of *The Spectator* in the same issue as follows:

I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea tables and in coffee-houses (38-9).

The first of Addison's essays chosen for analysis here is essay no. 543, dd. Sat. 22 Nov. 1712 (*The Spectator*, 1797, vol. 7, 274-78). The issue under consideration is intellectual. Addison uses physico-theological arguments drawing attention to the analytical scientific method of observation, with examples from the science of anatomy, the Newtonian world-picture and its workings, testifying to the power of God who created this greatness. This essay is an example of what in time came to be denominated Addison's lay-sermons in which "scientific discoveries are used in a manner highly typical of the age to strengthen the old argument for the existence of God from the design of the material universe" (Sambrook, 1990, 28). Addison greatly contributed

genuine religious belief. Addison owed it both to his upbringing and his age, the Augustan period, whereas Z.N. Mahmoud owed it to his field of specialization and his upbringing.<sup>3</sup>

Both wrote their essays in an orderly and precise form starting with a general statement which is developed through the text and ends with a neat conclusion. It always combines a criticism of society with a view of its improvement. In fact, Z.N. Mahmoud clearly stated early in his writing career that he had the intention of imitating the eighteenth-century English essay form in order to invigorate the Egyptian essay and give it a fresh start. He considered Addison "the father of the English essay" (Z.N.M., 1988, 7-15).<sup>4</sup>

We should also remember that both lived in transitional historical periods where lineaments of the readership they addressed was not clear-cut. In fact, knowing the kind of narratee inscribed in their essays would partly answer for the reason of their success.

### **The narratee in Addison's essays**

Addison's two essays to be dealt with here are taken from *The Spectator* of which over six hundred issues were published over three years. The periodical tended to avoid political issues and to focus on the social scene, concentrating on both moral and intellectual topics (Jack, 1984, 183-84). *The Spectator* is known to have greatly contributed to standardizing eighteenth-century manners as well as spreading scientific and intellectual information in eighteenth-century England (see Sambrook, 1990, chaps 1&2).

The reading public addressed by the periodical were members of the eighteenth-century rising middle class which was acquiring an ever-increasing dimension with the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution (Watt, 1970, 36-61). The readers Addison had in mind - whom Prince

none tried to apply them in detail to the genre of the literary essay. This seems strange because the essay more obviously than any other narrative form, presupposes a reader to whom it is addressed and for whom it is consciously written in the first place. This may be due to the essay form losing in the West the popularity it enjoyed in the past (see Fowler, 1987, 11) and with it waned the interest of Western critics in the genre. In our part of the world, however, the essay form is still a well-established genre and a name like Z.N. Mahmoud's cannot pass unnoticed by the majority of readers.

### **Why Addison and Z.N. Mahmoud?**

Addison and Z.N. Mahmoud are chosen because both are acknowledged leading figures in essay writing in their respective countries and because the latter avowed his indebtedness in this genre of writing to his English counterpart (Z.N.M., 1988, 9).

Though Joseph Addison and Z.N. Mahmoud belong to different cultures and different historical periods, they share, however, several points that are relevant here:

Both are leading essayists, though each in his own time and place. Addison's literary essays published in *The Tatler* (1709-1711), *The Spectator* (1711-1712, 1714) and *The Guardian* (1713) brought him, in time, world wide-fame. Z.N. Mahmoud, on the other hand, presented most of his philosophical knowledge in the form of essays he published as early as the 1930s in the Egyptian literary magazines *Al-Risala* and *Al-Thakafa*, in the 1960s in *Al-Fikr Al-Mo'assar* and, finally, 1973 – 1990 in the literary supplement of the Egyptian daily newspaper *Al-Ahram* (Z.N.M., 1996, 11-3).

Both essayists were characterized by rationalism of thought, accuracy of style and an orderly lay out embedded in a deep sense of

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There are some affinities between the novel and the essay as the following argument proves. For example, both the novel and the literary essay present an alternation between narrative and non-literary comments (Bal, 1999, 31).<sup>2</sup> The two genres share many affinities making it sometimes difficult to draw a dividing line between them. It has been noticed that the two genres often borrow from each other specially in our times when it has become difficult to draw delimiting lines between different genres (see Fowler, 1987, 28 and 190, Todorov, 1990, 13-5). Tzvetan Todorov states as an example that it has become increasingly difficult to classify some works of E.A. Poe, for instance, under the category of short story or literary essay (1990, 97). This is because there is and has always been an overlapping and borrowing between genres that sometimes defy classification.

Novelists and essayists naturally employ different rhetorical devices in addressing their readers, some of which may be welcome in one genre, but unwelcome in another, such as "overt rhetoric" or the "author's obtrusiveness" (see Booth, 1961, 180 & 187). Both genres, however, share the same aim, namely, to convey a moral message or a world-view to the reader. Novels usually present a development of plot, character and theme, whereas an essay primarily presents the development of an idea. In each, there must be an author who emerges in the text as a narrator and an implied reader/narratee who is assumed to be a receiver of the information. Consequently, the term 'narrator', who narrates the events in a fictive narrative, can be applied to the writer within an essay who presents the development of an idea. Both have the same aim, namely, that of addressing a reader within the framework of the text who could be either W. Booth's 'reader', W. Iser's 'implied reader', U. Eco's 'reader in the text', R. Barthes' 'receiver' or G. Prince's 'narratee'.

To my knowledge, most of the critics working in this domain applied their concepts and theories to narratives, specifically novels, and

inscribed within the text and is the equivalent of Iser's previously mentioned 'implied reader'.

As Prince explains, the "narratee" is created in the text and "emerges above all from the narrative addressed to him" (1980, 12). This "narrative" appears, according to Prince, in the form of a series of "signals" addressed to him: these "signals", once regrouped and studied, help in defining the characteristics of a narratee in a literary text (1980, 12).

According to Prince, it is rare, though possible, that the real, virtual or ideal reader coincides with the narratee in a given text. This concept is manifest in the essays of both Addison and Z.N. Mahmoud. In their work, the narratee does not change and accounts for the two essayists' popularity and success. And, as Iser explains

[the implied reader, i.e. Prince's narratee] provides a link between all the historical and individual actualizations of the text and makes them accessible to analysis (1987, 38).

### **Why the literary essay?**

Western critical writings have conditioned us to connect the narratee mainly with novels and short stories because it is in them that we mostly find narration and little non-literary comments. However, if we think of great English essayists such as Steele, Hazlitt and Ruskin, just to mention a few, we soon realize that their essays entail an alternation between non-literary comments and narration which appears mostly in the form of anecdotes, fictionalized personal experiences, figurative language and imagery in general, as will be pointed out later in the essays of Addison and Z.N. Mahmoud. So, a narratee or implied reader is bound to be inscribed in them.



... as a concept [the implied reader, i.e., the narratee] has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader (1987, 34).

Iser further explains that the 'implied reader' [i.e. the 'narratee'] is the "fictitious reader portrayed in the text" (1987, 36).

As for the function of the 'implied reader' in any text, Iser states:  
[his] own structure provides a frame of reference within which individual responses to a text [at any given historical time] can be communicated to others (1987, 37).<sup>1</sup>

Gerald Prince's critical writings place the 'narratee' as the reader the author addresses within the framework of the literary text. Prince's definition of the narratee and his method of approach will be applied throughout this study.

In his "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee" (1980), Prince marks a clear difference between the reader, i.e. any real reader who may get hold of the text and read it, and the narratee "who cannot be automatically identified with the reader" (9) since he is fictitious, he comes into being through the reading process and is confined to the limits of the printed text. Concerning the concept of the 'reader', Prince subdivides it into four categories which are the real, the virtual, the ideal reader, and the 'narratee'.

By the "real" reader, Prince means anyone who may read a given text, while the "virtual" reader is the one the author has in mind when he sets pen to paper. As to the "ideal" reader, he is the "one who would understand perfectly and would approve entirely the least of [the author's] words, the most subtle of his intentions" (9). Finally, the "narratee" is the one for whom "the narrator multiplies his explanations and justifies the particularities of his narrative" (9) and whom he addresses within the framework of the text. The narratee, then, is

the writing and reading process. Reader-oriented criticism, a domain that is presently gaining an increasing importance and entails names like Wolfgang Iser, Umberto Eco, Stanley Fish, Gerald Prince, among others, has greatly contributed to acknowledging and proving the importance and role of the reader as an essential element in the reading process for both the text and the reader.

The 'narratee' is a relatively new term introduced in critical theory which soon found its way in most critical texts dealing with narrative discourse. Though the meaning of the term seems to vary from one context to another, so that some critics have tended to equate the 'narratee' with the 'reader', there is a clear difference between them as the following explanations will prove:

Gerard Genette juxtaposes the 'narrator' in a given text to the 'narratee' whom he sees as the 'receiver' of a narrative (1983, 215). Genette explains that

. . . Like the narrator, the narratee is one of the elements in the narrating situation, and he is necessarily located at the same diegetic level [i.e. narrative level]; that is, he does not merge a priori with the reader . . . anymore than the narrator necessarily merges with the author (1983, 259).

Mieke Bal, like Genette, refers to the 'narratee' as "the receiver of the narrated text", or as "the addressee of the text" and clearly states that

. . . [the] narratee, as much as the narrator, is an abstract function rather than a person (1999, 63).

Wolfgang Iser, one of the pillars of reader-response criticism, differentiates clearly between the actual 'reader' who could be anybody at any given historical time and the 'narratee' whom he refers to as the "implied reader".

**The "Narratee" in some of the Essays of  
Joseph Addison and Zaki Naguib Mahmoud:  
A Comparative Study of Representative Essays\***

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The literary essay has always been a perfect tool for spreading knowledge and information of any kind depending on the personal interests and/or field of specialization of the essayist. My argument in this paper is that an essayist's success and popularity among his readers is partly owing to the kind of narratee or implied reader embedded in his texts. So, this paper aims at identifying the narratee in some of the literary essays of Addison (1672-1719) and Z.N. Mahmoud (1905-1993).\*\*

**What is a 'narratee'?**

Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) may be considered the critical work that first presented the reader as an important part in

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\*\* Zaki Naguib Mahmoud's name will appear in the body of the paper as Z.N. Mahmoud. When incorporated in a reference between brackets in the text, only the initials of his name will be used, i.e. Z.N.M. All translations from Arabic texts are mine.